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S E C R E T VILNIUS 000930

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM/ISO, PM/RSAT, PM/PMAT, NEA/I, EAP, AND EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: GOL DISINCLINED TO EMBED TROOPS IN IRAQI UNITS

REF: A. STATE 111082

[B](#). VILNIUS 657

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Alexander Titolo for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S) The GOL will likely not embed Lithuanian troops with Iraqi forces as part of the shift of MNF-I's emphasis to building Iraqi capacity (ref A). MOD Undersecretary Renatas Norkus told us that the GOL believes that its soldiers lack the necessary operational experience, language skills, and cultural training for this mission. Chief of Defense Major General Valdas Tutkus told us that he had had no objections to embedding Lithuanian troops with Iraqis as trainers, but that policymakers had decided against it.

[1](#)2. (S) Comment: Norkus's apprehensions are widely shared here. The MOD's Director of International Relations Alvydas Kunigelis raised the same concern when the Ambassador first broached this subject with MOD leadership in June (ref B). We suspect the subtext of this message is that Lithuania's leaders believe that embedding their troops in Iraqi units would exposed them to higher risks than the duties they currently perform - risks that would be political as well as military. Their concern does not indicate a lessening of their support for the Iraqi mission, but rather a preference to retain its current role in Iraq.
MULL